

THE CIRCUIT WRITER

Newsletter of the Commission on Archives and History

Spring 1973

Northern New Jersey Conference, The United Methodist Church

Number 1

The Commission on Archives and History has planned for some time to publish a newsletter to be distributed to church historians and members of the conference for the purpose of making Methodist history live. We are sending you this first issue in the sincere hope that you will find it interesting and helpful. We are most grateful to The Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe for assuming the position of Editor of this publication.

ABOUT NORTHERN NEW JERSEY METHODISM

REVIVAL AT FLANDERS, 1801

"There was a great work of God which began last year on Flanders' circuit, in the state of New Jersey, under the labors of the Rev. Elijah Woolsey and his colleagues. In 1801 he was stationed on Flanders' circuit, and after cutting off those corrupt members of the church who could not be reformed, he finally saw the blessed results of his labors in one of the most manifest displays of the grace of God ever witnessed in that part of the country. This work commenced at the quarterly meeting, at which it was judged that there were not less than six thousand persons present. It seems that before the meeting commenced, both brother Woolsey and the presiding elder, the Rev. Solomon Sharp, had a presentiment that the Lord was about to work at this meeting, and hence they went in the exercise of strong faith in the promises of God that it would be even so.

When brother Woolsey arose to address the assembly, feeling "the word of the Lord like fire shut up in his bones," he informed them that God would work among them; and accordingly a shaking and trembling began to be visible in the assembly, accompanied with strong cries to God for mercy. The meeting continued until eleven o'clock at night, and some indeed remained all night in these solemn exercises. The work thus commenced, spread throughout the circuit, and great was the rejoicing of the people, both among the young converts and the old professors of religion. This revival eventuated in the conversion of many souls, and created a hallowing influence on the surrounding population." P.132 ff.

---Nathan Bangs, A HISTORY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, New York, 1839, Vol II

DREW GETS HISTORIC WESLEY LETTER

A previously unknown letter, written four months before his death by John Wesley, has been acquired by the Drew Library. The manuscript, in good condition, is dated November 4, 1790, and addressed to Charles Atmore, a preacher associated with Wesley. Heretofore, it has apparently always been overlooked or incorrectly identified. It does not appear in the standard published collection of Wesley letters, nor have scholars at Drew been able to discover any mention of it in journals where other Wesley letters have been published subsequently.

The new acquisition brings to 103 the number of original Wesley letters in the Drew collection. The total does not include six others that Wesley copied in his own hand for purpose of reference, or numerous copies made by other people of the period. Also included in the Wesley collection at Drew is a plaster facial cast made at the time of his death

GUIDED TOURS of the Rose Memorial Library at Drew University are available by appointment with Dr. Lawrence Mc Intosh (377-3000 extension 354) or Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe (377-3000 extension 243)

ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Tuesday, May 15, 1973 at 7:00 P. M.
Madison United Methodist Church, Madison
Address "Doing Local Church History
for Landmarks and Liberation"
Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe of Drew University

PUBLISHED TWICE YEARLY IN THE
SPRING AND FALL BY THE COMMISSION.
CORRESPONDENCE SHOULD BE DIRECTED
TO THE EDITOR: DR. KENNETH E. ROWE,
DREW UNIVERSITY LIBRARY,
MADISON, N. J. 07940

RAHWAY: First United Methodist Church Rahway is planning a month-long celebration of its 175th birthday in May of 1973. Mr. Anthony J. Godlewski of the Anniversary Committee has done some research in the Conference Archives and the Methodist collection at Drew in preparing an updated history of the church. Mr. Godlewski plans to enter the theological school at Drew in the Fall of 1973.

WAYNE: Charles Jackson, historian of the United Methodist Church in Wayne, and Dr. F.J. Yetter, Associate Minister, are collaborating on a new history of their church. The history involves research on the lives of some thirty pastors who have served the church over a period of ninety years.

Both Mr. Jackson and Dr. Yetter testify to the immense importance which conference records have had in their research--not only in the memoirs of deceased members of the conference but in the year-by-year reports of the local church to the annual conference.

The United Methodist Women of the Wayne church think the history of sufficient importance to merit printing and have underwritten the expense to the extent of six hundred dollars. The history, which has been months in preparation, should be ready for the printer shortly.

OTHERS: We hope to make this a regular column in the newsletter. If your church is planning an anniversary celebration, or preparing a history, please contact the editor.

HOW TO WRITE AND PUBLISH THE HISTORY OF A UNITED METHODIST CHURCH?

A very helpful 15-page pamphlet by this title, written by Dr. Wallace G. Smeltzer, has been published by the Commission on Archives and History of the UMC. For a FREE COPY contact the Commission Secretary: The Rev. Robert O. Bryant, 323 Wood Ave., Linden, N. J. 07036.

TRAVELING EXHIBIT ON FRANCIS ASBURY

A small exhibit of Asbury memorabilia from the collection at Drew University is available on request for use at special celebrations in local churches. The exhibit includes several mounted prints and photographs, a set of ordination certificates signed by our first Bishop, along with a pair of spectacles he wore. When used with historical items from a local congregation, this makes an attractive addition to an anniversary or other historical observance. Contact Dr. Kenneth E. Rowe, Drew University Library, Madison, N. J. 07940, 377-3000, Ext. 243.

COPIES OF THE FRANCIS ASBURY BICENTENNIAL BOOKLET ARE STILL AVAILABLE

Copies are still available of the Francis Asbury Bicentennial Edition of the booklet "The Historical Trail" (published in 1971) to anyone who wants them (Postage 50¢). It contains a biographical sketch of Bishop Francis Asbury by Robert B. Steelman; Francis Asbury as Henry Boehm knew him by Howard F. Ships; Francis Asbury-- Greatness passing by: by Henry L. Lambdin; Francis Asbury: Footprints across the New Jersey Isthmus by John H. Coffee, Jr.; Asbury as a Preacher by Andrew C. Braun. This will be of great value to those seeking information about Francis Asbury. Get in touch with Rev. Paul E. Spiecker, 452 Lafayette Avenue, Hawthorne, New Jersey, 07506.

A NOTE TO THE RETIRED MEMBERS OF OUR CONFERENCE

One of the recommendations of the Commission on Archives and History that was approved and adopted by the Northern New Jersey Annual Conference was the following: "Each ministerial member of the Conference upon retirement will be encouraged to submit to the Commission in writing, an historical document concerning the churches he has served and the ministry that he has had among them."

At a subsequent meeting of the Commission it was decided that it was desirable to ask all retired ministerial members of the conference to submit an historical document of this nature. These will be kept in the Archives Room of the conference in the Drew University Library and will provide a most valuable historical source in years to come. Gentlemen, will you take a little time out from your busy retirement and write us all about your life in the ministry? Thank you - The Commission